

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for accessing a plurality of subterranean zones from the surface, comprising:

forming an entry well from the surface; and

5 forming two or more exterior drainage wells from the entry well through the subterranean zones, wherein the exterior drainage wells each extend outwardly and downwardly from the entry well for a first distance and then extend downwardly for a second distance, such that each exterior drainage well passes through a plurality of the subterranean zones and is operable to drain fluid from the plurality of the  
10 subterranean zones.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising forming a cavity proximate the intersection of one or more of the exterior drainage wells and one or more of the subterranean zones.

15

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising drilling a central drainage well extending downwardly from the entry well in a substantially vertical orientation through the subterranean zones, the central drainage well operable to drain one or more of the subterranean zones.

20

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the central drainage well comprises a larger diameter than the exterior drainage wells.

25 5. The method of Claim 3, further comprising forming a cavity in the central drainage well.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising forming the exterior drainage wells such that each exterior drainage well extends inwardly towards the central drainage well and intersects the enlarged cavity.

5 7. The method of Claim 5, further comprising:  
positioning a pump inlet in the enlarged cavity; and  
pumping fluids produced from one or more of the subterranean zones from the enlarged cavity to the surface.

10 8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising forming a plurality of drainage systems each comprising an entry well and two or more associated exterior drainage wells, the drainage systems located in proximity to one another such that they nest adjacent one another.

15 9. The method of Claim 8, wherein each drainage systems comprises six exterior drainage wells and covers a substantially hexagonal area and wherein the drainage systems nest together in a honeycomb pattern.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the plurality of subterranean zones  
20 comprise coal seams.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
positioning a pump inlet in one or more of the drainage wells; and  
pumping fluid produced from a plurality of the subterranean zones from the  
25 pump inlet to the surface.

12. The method of Claim 1, further comprising injecting fluids into one or more of the subterranean zones from the surface using the drainage wells.

13. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:  
inserting a guide tube bundle into the entry well, the guide tube bundle  
comprising two or more twisted guide tubes; and  
5 forming the exterior drainage wells from the entry well using the guide tubes.

14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the two or more exterior drainage  
wells are formed from the entry well using a whipstock.

15. A drainage system for accessing a plurality of subterranean zones from the surface, comprising:

an entry well extending from the surface; and

5 two or more exterior drainage wells extending from the entry well through the subterranean zones, wherein the exterior drainage wells each extend outwardly and downwardly from the entry well for a first distance and then extend downwardly for a second distance, such that each exterior drainage well passes through a plurality of the subterranean zones and is operable to drain fluid from the plurality of the subterranean zones.

10

16. The system of Claim 15, further comprising a cavity proximate the intersection of one or more of the exterior drainage wells and one or more of the subterranean zones.

15

17. The system of Claim 15, further comprising a central drainage well extending downwardly from the entry well in a substantially vertical orientation through the subterranean zones, the central drainage well operable to drain one or more of the subterranean zones.

20

18. The system of Claim 17, wherein the central drainage well comprises a larger diameter than the exterior drainage wells.

19. The system of Claim 17, further comprising a cavity formed in the central drainage well.

25

20. The system of Claim 19, wherein each exterior drainage well extends inwardly towards the central drainage well and intersects the enlarged cavity.

21. The system of Claim 19, further comprising a pump configured to pump fluids produced from one or more of the subterranean zones from the enlarged cavity to the surface.

5 22. The system of Claim 15, further comprising a plurality of drainage systems each comprising an entry well and two or more associated exterior drainage wells, the drainage systems located in proximity to one another such that they nest adjacent one another.

10 23. The system of Claim 22, wherein each drainage system comprises six exterior drainage wells and covers a substantially hexagonal area, and wherein the drainage systems nest together in a honeycomb pattern.

15 24. The system of Claim 15, wherein the plurality of subterranean zones comprise coal seams.

25. The system of Claim 15, further comprising a pump configured to pump fluid produced from a plurality of the subterranean zones from one or more of the exterior drainage wells to the surface.

20

26. The system of Claim 15, further comprising a guide tube bundle positioned in the entry well, the guide tube bundle comprising two or more twisted guide tubes, and wherein the exterior drainage wells are formed from the entry well using the guide tubes.